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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Thursday, November 16, 1939.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "FAMOUS TREES." Information from the Forest Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

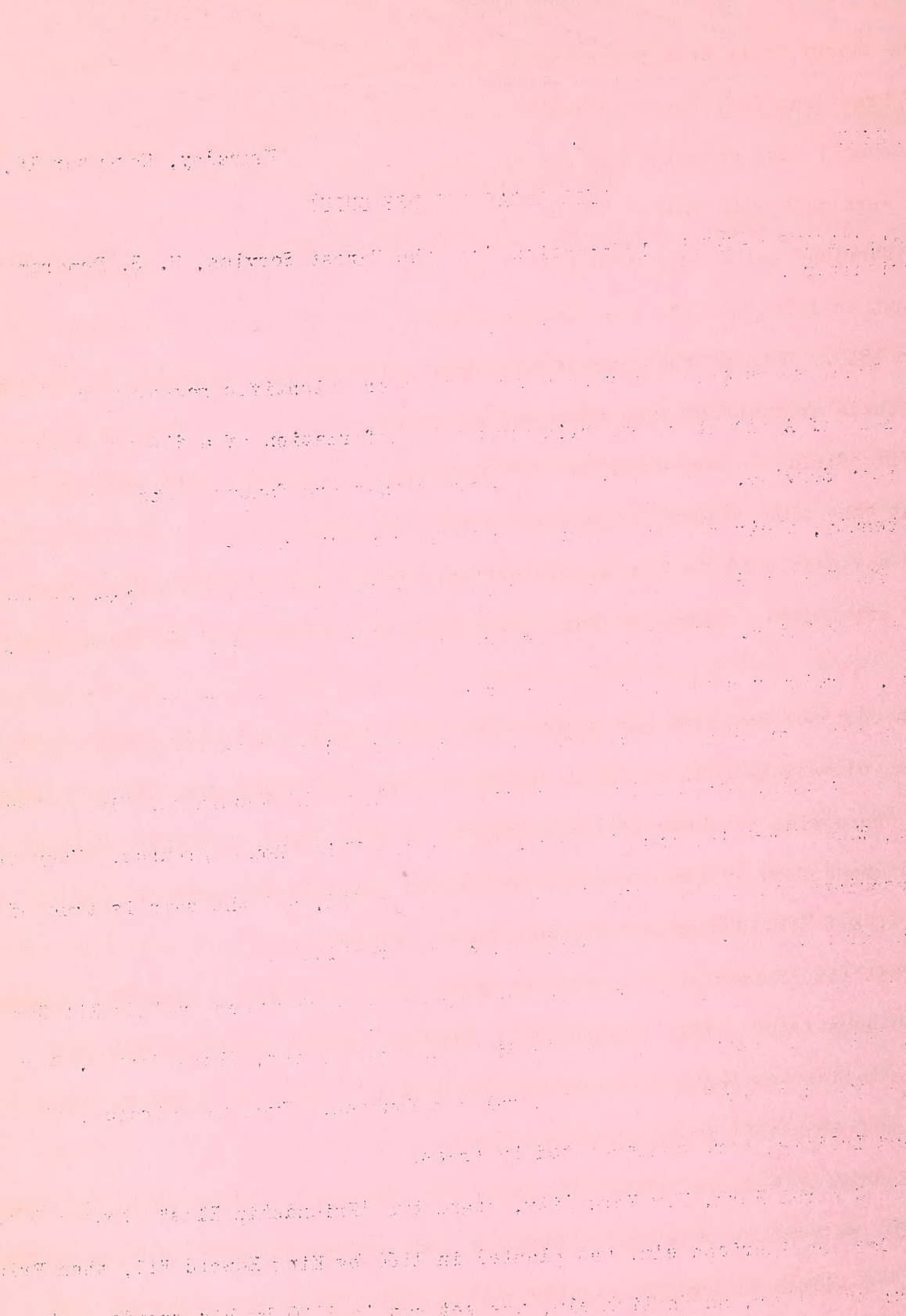
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Today we're going to vary our programs on scientific research in the U.S. Department of Agriculture and bring you some information of a different type from the Forest Service. It's about trees- trees that are famous, like some people, for their beauty, their remarkable size or their connections.

The Forest Service has reports and records of famous trees from almost every state in the Union. There are trees associated with presidents and statesmen, explorers, foreign visitors, public citizens. Some of these are in the birthplaces of the people for whom they are named. Some were planted to honor given persons. Some were actually planted by their namesakes, like the Washington Elm at Berkeley Springs, West Virginia, and the Hayes Elm on the White House grounds. Many trees were associated with something George Washington did, and the same is true of Lincoln, Grant, Theodore Roosevelt, and other presidents.

Other famous persons who have had trees named for them include Kit Carson, John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay, Buffalo Bill, General Custer, Clara Barton, Davy Crockett, Mad Anthony Wayne, and General Sam Houston. Even two pirates, Black Beard and LaFitte, were commemorated by trees.

In Central Park, New York City, stand two "Friendship Elms" about 100 feet apart. One, an American elm, was planted in 1860 by King Edward VII, then Prince of Wales; the other, an English elm, was set out in 1920 by his grandson, the Duke of Windsor, then Prince of Wales. Central Park has also a European green beech tree planted in 1919 by the Queen of the Belgians. And Washington's famous



Japanese cherry trees were presented in 1909 and 1912 to Mrs. William Howard Taft, wife of President Taft, as a friendly token toward the United States.

Council oaks and elms and treaty trees in many places mark spots where pledges were made with Indian tribes during the settling of this country, or where other historical gatherings were held. The famous Charter Oak of Connecticut was blown down in 1856, and the Penn Treaty Elm near Philadelphia succumbed to high winds in 1810. Both of these trees have many authentic descendants,- trees planted from seeds or cuttings from the original trees.

Litchfield, Connecticut, has a "whipping post elm" which was used as late as 1815. At that time, however, the culprit could stretch his arms around the trunk, which is now nearly 12 feet in circumference. Peekskill, New York, also has a whipping tree, used in Revolutionary days to punish deserters from the American army.

In contrast to trees for punishment, there are a number associated with educators, educational and religious institutions. Many colleges have used tree-planting ceremonies to honor their presidents or distinguished alumni. Among writers commemorated by trees we find Mark Twain, Jack London, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth, Sidney Lanier, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Louisa May Alcott, Whittier, Cooper and Margaret Preston. The Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest is a 4,000 acre tract within the Nantahala National Forest in North Carolina.

The tallest tree now known in this country is said to be a redwood 364 feet high in the Humboldt State National Park near Dyerville, California. General Sherman Bigtree in Sequoia National Park is 272 feet high, and General Grant Bigtree is 264 feet tall. Some of the Sequoia's are estimated to be 3,000 to 4,000 years old. California has not only the immense redwoods or sequoias, but many giant trees of other species, tops of their kind. There are incense cedars, junipers, sugar pines, gum trees, fig trees, laurel, live oaks, white oaks and

walnuts among these big trees. Oregon has a Douglas fir 295 feet high.

East of the Rockies, a tree is considered tall when it is between 75 and 100 feet high, and many states have such trees. Most of them are more than 100 years old. In Louisiana recently, a cypress was cut down which had rings proving it was about 1,300 years old.

California has an interesting tree in quite another class which I did not mention. That's the parent Washington Navel Orange tree at Riverside. This tree was the foundation of the huge commercial navel-orange industry of the southwest.

Wind and weather sometimes cause trees to grow into strange shapes. Freak trees may grow out of old stumps or develop like Siamese twins, or twist into lyres or other shapes, or grow completely around objects like stones or ironwork. In 1861 a farmer named Johnson who lived near Waterloo, New York, hung his scythe on the crotch of a balsam poplar and went off to the Civil War. He told his wife not to touch the scythe until he came back. But he never returned, and the tree has grown around the blade. Two other scythes now keep the first one company, hung there by two sons of the present owner of the tree, who went to the World War.

Certain trees have had special legal protection. The most famous of these is the "Oak That Owns Itself" near Athens, Georgia. A deed dated 1820 by William H. Jackson says: "For in consideration of the great love I bear this tree and the great desire I have for its protection, I convey entire possession of itself and all land within 8 feet of the tree on all sides." This old deed has always been respected.

Some of you will find other equally interesting trees if you explore the landmarks and historical mementoes of your neighborhood. And even if there are none of great historic interest, you are almost sure to find trees of great beauty, a delight to all passers-by, as worthy of preservation as the "Oak That Owns Itself."

